

ASHBY BEATS K.O. TO CLAIM WINNER FOR WANDERERS

By "Spot Kick"

Wycombe Wanderers 2;
Barking 1.

THE modest lad from Stokenchurch, Ivor Ashby, was the hero of Wycombe Wanderers' pyrrhic victory on Saturday over the robust young Barking team — for Isthmian League points ardently harvested at the cost of three casualties.

Shortly after he had been knocked semi-conscious by a blow in the face, Ashby, making only his second appearance for the senior side, tottered back on the field still slightly concussed, to claim the winning goal with a classic 30-yard drive six minutes before the end, when it looked as if Barking might turn the tables in a boisterous climax.

But it was a melancholy commentary on an uninspiring game that the Wanderers had to rely on a belated surprise packet to get the better of such undistinguished opposition.

Even without two of their leading stalwarts, skipper Paul Bates and right-half Dave Thomas, both on county duty, Wycombe should have buttoned up the Barking boys with four or five goals long before Ashby's face-saver settled home supporters' mounting blood pressure.

PUNCH LACKING

There was little about the display to warm the spirits of the Loakes Park crowd on so bleak and biting a December afternoon.

The home defence, in spite of one or two moments of indecision by Barry Darvill, had little difficulty in coping with an unimpressive Barking front line, which failed until late in the game to achieve any semblance of cohesion.

But although wing halves Ashby and Dave Worley provided some sound constructive support, the forwards failed to press home with any real bite their many promising midfield advances.

Hopes were often spurred by the artistry of Len Worley or by occasional brisk sallies by the wingers, Rockell and Hyde, but, except for two occasions, the lack of final punch left lucky Barking unscathed in the first half.

They were lucky indeed to escape on the first occasion when Holmes, tried for the first time as leader of the attack, whipped in a brilliant shot which left-back Len Harvey managed to clear off the goal-line with goalkeeper Danny O'Leary out of position.

Holmes was injured in making the shot and had to leave the field for attention, but soon after he had returned, in the 35th minute, Peter James was at hand in the goalmouth to convert a centre by Hyde to put Wycombe ahead.

With Holmes limping on the wing and first Rockell and then James moving into the centre, the Wanderers still lacked fire power in the second half, particularly with Barking exploiting the offside trap with some success.

And home supporters' faces lengthened when, while Ashby was receiving treatment by the touchline, inside-right Brian Banks produced a surprise block-buster, a hooked shot of great power, which completely surprised goalkeeper Alan Jones to level the scores 27 minutes after the resumption.

The goal gave Barking the spur they needed for an all-out comeback in the last 15 minutes — a rally pressed home even more vigorously after an injury to Hyde ten minutes before the end had still further handicapped the home attack.

But Ashby's winner in the rough-and-tumble climax, which produced the first real thrill of the day, was certainly no less than Wycombe merited.

Wycombe 'crock' bags winner

Wycombe Wdrs. 2 Barking 1

WITH three of their players injured in a rough-and-tumble Isthmian League game against lowly Barking, Wycombe Wanderers hobbled to well-deserved victory in the last few minutes.

And it was one of their casualties, right-half Ivor Ashby, in only his second appearance for the side, who claimed the winner.

Ashby, still suffering from concussion after a blow in the face, scored the best goal of the match with a tremendous 25-yard drive at a time when Barking looked like holding their technically superior opponents to a draw.

Wycombe had the unimpressive Barking side largely on the defensive throughout the first half. Inside-right Len Worley was the inspiration of many of the attacks which kept O'Leary constantly in action in the Barking goal.

And, in spite of an injury to centre forward Holmes, who was hurt in making a shot which left-back Harvey stopped on the goal-line, Wycombe took a well-deserved first half lead through James after 35 minutes.

Holmes limped to the wing, but Wycombe still kept the initiative in the second half until Ashby went off injured. Then inside-left Brian Banks equalised for Barking with a surprise overhead shot.

Wycombe had their third setback in the last 10 minutes, when their left-winger Steve Hyde went off with an ankle injury.